

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
USACHRA, NORTHEAST REGION
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, MARYLAND 21005-5001

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL BULLETIN

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National Security Personnel System

As you've likely read by now, the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) will replace the current personnel system for the DoD civilian workforce. NSPS will provide streamlined and more flexible processes for Staffing (including recruiting, hiring, advancement and promotion); pay administration and performance management; job classification; labor management relations; and discipline, adverse actions and employee appeals. While DoD will publish implementing issuances (e.g., directives, instructions, and manuals) containing the details of the system, the following general information has been summarized to explain the system and the projected deployment schedule as we know it. Keep in mind that this entire schedule may be adjusted as we proceed towards deployment.

First of all, NSPS will not totally change the current personnel system. Current merit systems principles, veterans' preference, rules against prohibited personnel practices, anti-discrimination laws, leave and attendance rules, travel and subsistence rules, pay for political executives and firefighters, rules on employee training, and safety and drug abuse programs are unaffected.

National Security Personnel System (continued)

Likewise, benefits such as health and life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, retirement, annual and sick leave, severance pay and moving expenses are untouched as a result of NSPS. Additionally, DoD's traditional tools for transition assistance such as outplacement services, priority placement program (PPP) and separation incentives (such as Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay or VSIP) will be available to employees under NSPS.

Secondly, NSPS is actually comprised of three separate elements that will be deployed incrementally: (1) the Human Resources System; (2) the Labor Relations System, and (3) the Appeals System. Additionally, NSPS will be implemented in phases, or spirals, throughout DoD based on an event driven approach. There will be three separate deployments of Spiral One alone. Activities on APG are identified within every Spiral as listed below. No Activity on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list will automatically be excluded from Spiral One. The Components will assess whether inclusion of a BRAC site in Spiral One is appropriate, considering such factors as the anticipated time frame for the closure/realignment and impact on the mission and the workforce.

The first element of NSPS that is slated for implementation is the Labor Relations System. It is planned to become effective for all bargaining unit employees throughout DoD in late FY05. This includes NAF employees, wage grade employees, overseas organizations, organizations under laboratory demonstration projects, etc., in every Activity in all Spirals. The implementation of the Labor Relations System will not eliminate unions or bargaining units.

The remaining two elements of NSPS will be implemented using a spiral approach starting with the Human Resources System element which will launch with Spiral 1.1 early in FY 06. However, it will be deployed in phases starting with only the Performance Management piece of the HR System. (Note that while the vast majority of DoD employees are eligible for coverage by the HR System element of NSPS, the provisions will initially apply only to selected General Schedule employees. Wage grade employees will be phased in later so their pay will be unaffected until Spiral Two.) The balance of the Human Resources System (i.e., paybanding, staffing flexibilities, etc.) will deploy early in calendar year 2006 for Spiral 1.1 Activities, after any General Pay Increases and Within Grade buyouts. This means that all GS employees will receive any January 2006 federal pay raise as currently entitled. The first performance-based payout under NSPS will be in January 2007.

The third element of NSPS, the Appeals System, will also deploy early in calendar year 2006 for Spiral 1.1 Activities.

Then, the Spiral 1.2 Activities will go under all portions of the Human Resources System and the Appeals System in the Spring of 2006.

National Security Personnel System (continued)

Lastly, a spiral approach will be used to incrementally phase in the rest of the eligible DoD civilian workforce over the subsequent two to three years, upgrading and improving NSPS as it goes forward. The APG schedule is as follows:

Spiral 1.1	CHRA, CPOC, CPAC
Spiral 1.2	Army Materiel Command activities (RDECOM)
Spiral 1.3	Medical Command activities (CHPPM; MRICD; KAHG; DENTAC)
Spiral 2	Remaining activities including Acquisition Demo project employees
Spiral 3	Laboratory Demo project employees (ARL; by law, excluded until 1 October 2008)

All employees, supervisors, managers (including military supervisors) and the human resources community will be trained extensively prior to being affected by NSPS. Training will be delivered within 30 days prior to implementation for Activities within the Spiral.

As for pay under NSPS, pay increases will be based primarily on performance and/or contribution, and unacceptable performers will not be eligible for pay increases. In a pay banding system, there are no “steps” similar to the GS system. Initial entry into NSPS will ensure that each employee is placed in the appropriate pay band without loss of pay. Future pay increases and/or performance bonuses will be based on the employee’s annual performance rating. The proposed rules include a rigorous “pay pool” process to distribute performance-based pay increases throughout organizations; the pay pool process will be a credible process with appropriate safeguards to ensure that outstanding performers are rewarded accordingly. The proposed pay rules also provide for periodic “rate range” adjustments to adjust the minimum and/or maximum rate of a pay band. When a minimum rate of a pay band is adjusted upward, employees will receive an equivalent increase. However, unacceptable performers will not be eligible for such increases. The proposed pay system also includes a locality-based component of pay called a “local market supplement” in addition to an employee’s basic pay. The local market supplement will be based on market conditions related to geographical and occupational factors, and may differ from one occupation to another in a given locality area. Again, upward adjustments to local market supplements will not be given to unacceptable performers.

If you would like more information about the NSPS, visit the NSPS website at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps>. In addition to the latest news, you will also find “The Fundamentals of NSPS: An Overview of the Proposed Regulations” which is an interactive,

National Security Personnel System (continued)

computer based course recommended for line managers, supervisors and employees interested in learning more about NSPS. The CPAC POC for this information is Ms. Sue Cassady, 3-7156.

Beneficiary Forms

Beneficiary forms may be completed locally at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC); they are not done through the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C). The beneficiary forms must be completed by the employee, signed, dated and witnessed by two individuals who are not designated beneficiaries. As a reminder, if an employee does not have a beneficiary on file, payment will be made in accordance with the legal "Order of Precedence". The applicable Order of Precedence is listed on each Designation of Beneficiary form. Forms may be obtained from the Office of Personnel Management website at www.opm.gov with the exception of the TSP Beneficiary forms which may be obtained from www.tsp.gov. You may also request the forms from your servicing personnel assistant at the CPAC. A list of the Designation of Beneficiary forms and the methods for processing them are as follows:

Form SF 2808 – CSRS Designation of Beneficiary: send original and copy to OPM's address located on the form. A copy will be returned to the employee after certification by OPM.

Form SF 3102 – FERS Designation of Beneficiary: send original and copy to your servicing personnel assistant at the CPAC. A copy will be returned to the employee after certification by the CPAC.

Form SF 2823 – Designation of Beneficiary, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program: send original and copy to your servicing personnel assistant at the CPAC. A copy will be returned to the employee after certification by the CPAC.

Form SF 1152 – Designation of Beneficiary, Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee: send original and copy to your servicing personnel assistant at the CPAC. A copy will be returned to the employee after certification by the CPAC.

TSP 3 – TSP Designation of Beneficiary: employees should make a copy for their own records and send the original to the Thrift Savings Plan Service Office, the address is located on the back of the form. TSP will not return a copy to the employee.

Any questions should be directed to your servicing Human Resources Assistant.

Elimination of TSP Open Season

Public Law 108-469, signed into law 21 December 2004, eliminates TSP Open Seasons and the restrictions on contribution elections which are tied to open seasons. However, the law does not eliminate the waiting period for FERS new hires to begin receiving agency contributions. Consequently, beginning 1 July 2005, participants may make TSP contribution elections **at any time**.

Employees **must** contact the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-276-9287 or <https://www.abc.army.mil> to enroll in TSP or change the amount of their contribution. Employees must also contact the TSP Office at 1-877-968-3778 or www.tsp.gov if they wish to change their fund allocation. Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) are required for both ABC-C and TSP.

Employees who wish to change the way their current balance is invested may request a TSP Interfund Transfer. Interfund transfers can be made by calling TSP, using the website or completing a TSP-50. The TSP-50 is available from your servicing Human Resources Assistant.

Nonappropriated Funds (NAF) Job Opportunities

Do you want to support the soldier and his/her family by helping to ensure their community and recreation facilities are the best they can be? Do you know anyone looking for a job? NAF needs qualified applicants to accomplish this mission. Civilian and military retirees have traditionally been excellent employees. Your retirement pay is not subject to deductions and NAF employment may provide an interim career until you are ready for "full retirement". The following positions are open for applications and a person can apply at anytime:

Aerobic Instructors	Bartenders
Cooks	Custodial Workers & Janitors
Food Service Workers	Gardeners
Night Managers for Top of the Bay	Recreation Aids
Waiter/Waitress	

We also have additional vacancy announcements that are announced as needed. You may call 410-278-5126 to verify what announcements are currently open. You may access our open continuous vacancy announcements and application forms at: www.apg.army.mil/cpac.

You are also welcome to visit our Nonappropriated Funds Human Resources Office located in the lower level of Building 305.

Union Dues

Unions that have been certified by the Federal Labor Relations Authority are charged with providing representation to all employees within a bargaining unit. Employees within that unit may elect to become union members and authorize payroll deductions to cover membership dues. Individuals within a unit that accept supervisory positions or transfer to a position that is not covered, should cancel their payroll deduction since they are no longer a member of the bargaining unit. Employees that desire to remain associate members should contact their union representative to discuss an appropriate arrangement for paying membership dues.

Leave Changes

Under the expanded family and medical leave policy, employees may schedule and be granted up to 24 hours of leave without pay to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child, to accompany their children to routine medical or dental appointments such as annual checkups and vaccinations, or accompany their elderly relatives to routine medical or dental appointments or other professional services related to the care of the elderly relative, such as making arrangements for housing, meals, telephone, banking services and other similar activities.

In a recent decision, the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit held that section 6323 of 5 USC states that employees should be charged military leave only for the days that they were scheduled to work. If current employees, as well as those who have retired or separated from the Federal Government, were charged military leave on a non-workday they may have a claim under the Butterbaugh decision. Claims may be filed under the Barring Act (5 USC 3702) with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and should be submitted to: **DFAS Payroll Office, PO Box 33717, Pensacola, FL 32508-3717**. The claimant must identify their current servicing payroll office and specify each non-workday that the claimant was charged leave providing evidence to support their claim. Recommended evidence could be proof of attendance or any other documentation indicating active military duty that included non-workdays during the applicable period. Claims should indicate if annual leave or LWOP for military duty was used as a result of the erroneous leave policy. As in all claims, the burden of proof is on the claimant. If their claim is approved, employees will be credited 1 day of annual leave for each day of annual leave that was used as a result of the erroneous leave policy. A maximum of four annual leave days is creditable for each fiscal year.

Compensatory Time for Travel

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued interim regulations implementing a new provision of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004. Section 203 added section 5550b, establishing a new form of compensatory time off for time spent by an employee in a travel status. These regulations also amend part 550 N of Title 5 CFR by adding a new subpart N, Compensatory Time for Travel. Effective January 28, 2005, most Federal employees are entitled to earn compensatory time off for time spent in a travel status away from the employee's official

Compensatory Time for Travel (continued)

duty station, when such time is not otherwise compensable. An agency must credit an eligible employee with compensatory time off for time in a travel status if the employee is required to travel away from the official duty station and the travel time is not otherwise compensable hours of work under other legal authority.

Travel means officially authorized travel. An employee may not receive double compensation for travel hours. This means an employee may not receive compensation for travel time that is otherwise compensable as hours of work. If an employee is compensated for hours spent traveling outside of their normal duty day, e.g., OT, RDO, they may not receive compensatory time for travel. Travel time includes the time actually spent traveling between the official duty station and a temporary duty station, or between two duty stations and the usual waiting time. Usual waiting time includes the time required to get to the airport prior to a flight, time waiting for a connecting flight, subject to exclusions for bonafide meal periods. In Army, there is a requirement for compensatory time to be requested and approved in advance. That means that except in those cases where employees get “stranded”, anticipated hours of compensatory time should be known based on pre-travel itineraries. Compensatory time for travel will be requested in increments of 15 minutes. An employee must use his or her accrued “compensatory time for travel” within 26 pay periods or it will be forfeited. The compensatory time for travel will not convert to pay, and it will not transfer to another agency or to a position not covered by subpart N.

Interim rules covering compensatory time off for travel may be found on the OPM website at www.opm.gov. Please contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist in the CPAC, if you have any questions.

Upward Mobility Program (UMP)

Upward Mobility, as a program, is a systematic management effort aimed at planning and carrying out a set of specific training and developmental opportunities for lower level employees who are in positions or occupational series which do not enable them to realize their full work potential.

Upward mobility permits permanent competitive and excepted service employees in positions, GS-08 or equivalent and below, with demonstrated potential for higher level work to be developed under a training plan. Equivalent relates all Wage Grade plans to the General Schedule pay plan on the basis of representative rates. Employees are placed out of positions or series with limited promotion potential into positions or series which provide advancement opportunity to target grades beyond the employee’s current grades. Employees presently in a career program, career interns, cooperative education, term and temporary employees are not eligible for enrollment in the UMP.

The goals of the Upward Mobility Program (UMP) should be tailored to meet the mission and organizational needs of the activity, while keeping in line with the overarching Army goals to:

Upward Mobility Program (UMP) (continued)

The goals of the Upward Mobility Program (UMP) should be tailored to meet the mission and organizational needs of the activity, while keeping in line with the overarching Army goals to:

- * Provide the means by which the capabilities of participants are increased to the fullest extent possible.
- * Provide employees with an opportunity to enter bridge positions through planned on-the-job and formal training.
- * Enhance employee growth, career development and opportunities.
- * Increase employee morale.

Critical to the success of the program is the identification of appropriate target positions. To identify suitable positions, it is necessary to analyze the skills of current employees, review current and anticipated position vacancies, and determine which positions could be restructured into bridge positions. This is a combined effort between your servicing Human Resources Specialist and management officials. Selected positions are restructured to the entry or intermediate grade levels with an identified final target grade. Selection for placement into an UMP position is accomplished through competitive procedures. The UMP is an integral part of the Affirmative Employment Program and serves as one vehicle for placement of women, minorities, and people with handicapping conditions into positions where under-representation exists.

For more information on the UMP, contact your servicing Human Resources Specialist.

The US Army Civilian Personnel Online – CPOL Portal

The US Army Civilian Personnel Online Portal is a “one-stop” site that provides access to all the information you may need as an Army/Civilian Supervisor or employee. The portal is divided into three main areas: Employment, Reference & Tools, and Employee Portal. The employment section is open to the general public and is where applicants for Army employment can access information about current and projected vacancies, as well as, access the Army’s Resume Builder and associated tools for applying for Army jobs. In the Reference & Tools section, the general public can access a variety of reference materials pertaining to civilian human resources management in the Army. The third section, Employee Portal, requires an Army Knowledge Online account and provides access to all the information you may need as a Civilian Personnel employee such as automated applications, information, news, benefits and much more. You can access the US Army Civilian Personnel Online Portal at <http://acpol.army.mil>.

New Applicant-Friendly Vacancy Announcements

Effective 25 April 2005, the Northeast Civilian Personnel Operations Center (NECPOC) began issuing new applicant-friendly vacancy announcements. These new vacancy announcements make job vacancies more attractive to applicants. There are three new features which include an expanded and enhanced description of job duties; an enhanced and more direct description of the qualifications and specialized experience needed to do the work; and a place for other information about the job such as its location and environment, as well as other advantages to working for the organization. The main goal is to provide clear, complete information to the applicant in order for them to make an informed decision about applying for the position. The new initiative requires that all vacancy announcements be written in down-to-earth plain English, speaking directly to the applicant.

We believe these new vacancy announcements will enhance management's ability to fill their vacancies and will reflect Department of the Army and our installation/organizations as the employers of choice.

“APG is a great place to live, work and play at the top of the bay.”

SUPERVISORS' CORNER

HR for Supervisors Course

The Human Resources for Supervisors course is a 36-hour course designed to teach civilian and military supervisors their human resource management responsibilities. The course is presented by the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) on a quarterly basis and covers HR legal and regulatory requirements, HR processes, and the automated HR tools designed to assist supervisors in requesting and tracking personnel actions. Major topics include Merit System Principles, Classification, Staffing, Employee Development, and Labor/Management-Employee Relations. The method of instruction includes lectures, hands-on computer training, class discussions and exercises. The material covered in the HR for Supervisors course is beneficial for both new and more experienced supervisors. To date, the CPAC has conducted five sessions of the course with two more sessions tentatively scheduled before the end of the calendar year.

Revised Gatekeeper Checklist

The following questions were added to the Recruitment Information, Manager Section of the Gatekeeper Checklist: About this position/activity; About the Surrounding Area; URL to your organization's web page; Other Advantages (perks) of working for your activity. These additions were a result of the new applicant-friendly vacancy announcement initiative. The information provided in these sections will be published on the vacancy announcement and will permit you (the manager) to market your jobs much more effectively by providing more detailed information on the benefits of working in your organization and for the Army.

Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives

Section 101 of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-411) grants agencies enhanced flexibilities to recruit and retain a high-quality civilian workforce. The new Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention (3Rs) payment authorities replace the former recruitment, relocation bonus, and retention allowance authorities. Basic Pay definition now includes locality pay portion of a GS pay schedule. The impact is a higher dollar amount available for the 3Rs.

The DoD Interim Plan was published 24 May 05. The interim plan continues the previous policies on 3Rs incentives, making only the changes necessary to comply with the new legal requirements. Expanded authorities are to be published at a later date, such as being able to grant more than 25% of basic pay and being able to make payments on installments. Authorizing officials are now required to document and keep records on the rationale for granting the incentives and service agreements now require more extensive documentation.

We expect additional guidance on the new rules on the 3Rs in the near future from OPM, DoD, and DA regarding more definitive guidance on documentation, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements and sample service agreements.

Delegated authority and guidance permitting immediate use of the 3Rs will come through your official chain of command. Recommend supervisors and managers to whom approval authority is further delegated closely review and follow documentation and procedural guidance in the DoD interim plan, confer with the servicing CPAC and CPOC representatives, and maintain a file with the appropriate documentation for each approved incentive.

DIANE J. SMITH

Director, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

Notes:

- Questions about information in the Bulletin should be directed to your designated CPAC representative, in the absence of cited POC.
- The Bulletin Editor (Suzanne Schultz, 3-9514) welcomes your opinions, ideas, and suggestions. Correspondence from individuals and organizations is welcome. All correspondence must have the name and location of the originator, in the event there is a need to reach the author for additional information.